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THE NEW YORK

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## Fourteenth Meeting of the Latin Club

The fourteenth regular meeting of The New York Latin Club is called for Saturday, February 18, at 12 M, in the Hotel St Denis, corner of Broadway and Eleventh Street, New York. Professor H C Elmer, of Cornell University, will address the club.

H H BICE, *President*  
A L HODGES, *Secretary*

## Extracts from a Teacher's Note Book

(PROFESSOR ROLFE'S ADDRESS BEFORE THE NEW YORK  
LATIN CLUB, December 3, 1904)

### In Five Parts, Part IV

I have now come to the only part of my former creed about which I have radically changed my mind, and here I must disagree with Professor Bennett, most of whose views in his *Teaching of Latin* I heartily endorse. I fear that I shall not meet with your approval either, but I submit my views for your consideration. I refer to the amount of time which should be devoted to the study of the Roman Art of War and to the political and historical details of the writer's career while reading Cæsar, and to corresponding topics while reading the other writers of the secondary school course. Here again a growing conviction has been strengthened by recent experience. As I said, I am teaching a section of freshmen this year (an experience which I have not had for some time) which is quite up to the average of those in our better colleges and universities. We find our time fully occupied in learning to read and to translate Livy and to write easy Latin exercises. If this is true of a freshman class, it surely is even more so of the average high school class, and I must say that I do not at all believe in studying Cæsar's career as a general and a statesman in the second year of Latin study, except in so far as a knowledge of it can be absorbed from a careful translation of his Commentaries; and the same thing applies *mutatis mutandis* to Cicero and Vergil. I am led to this conclusion in part also by my own experience as a schoolboy and as a student at Harvard. In my day there were no editions with colored plates and handsome but often irrelevant pictures. No plans in multi-colored chalk made the blackboard gay, and no one had conceived the idea that palaeography might profitably be made a high school study. Save for being held to account for a knowledge of the meaning of all personal and geographical names, we did nothing but translate and "parse". We learned to read and write Latin much more readily, I think, than the average freshman of to-day, and we certainly did not show the dense ignorance of history, geography and kindred topics which is not uncommon at present. Even when I read Suetonius with Professor Lane at Harvard in my senior year, I do not remember that we made an exhaustive study of The Biography in Roman Literature, or

the Roman Institutions of the Empire, or The Character of Tiberius or of Nero, or in general that the course was conducted on what a friend of mine once elusively referred to as "higher lines". We were blissfully ignorant of palaeography and epigraphy, and we were not referred to volume so and so of the *Rheinisches Museum*, the *Philologus*, and the other periodicals which are to-day so freely cited in text-books intended for the use of freshmen and sophomores. Yet the course was both interesting and profitable, and we read an amount of our author which would stagger a senior of to-day. I should say that well through the undergraduate course the best results would be reached by reading and translating the Latin writers, with due attention, of course, to the full meaning of what is read, but without special studies of various kinds. In the secondary school the only way in which the studies referred to can be carried on without interfering with the real work of the course seems to me to be that followed by Professor D'Ooge of Ypsilanti, if he still follows it. He told me once that before beginning to read Cæsar, Cicero, or Vergil, he devoted a few weeks to a study of the topics usually treated in the introductions to our modern text-books, and then read his author.

In what I have said of college work in this connection, my reference has been only to what may be called "reading courses", which ought to form a large part of the undergraduate curriculum. Let there be by all means in addition to these lecture courses on Roman Private Life, Roman Political Institutions, and the like; but let us not deceive ourselves and suppose that students who elect such courses alone, or for the most part, learn any great amount of Latin. I should even favor offering courses on the History of Roman Literature to students who know no Latin at all, not for the benefit of those benighted beings who think that they can be specialists in the modern languages and literatures without a knowledge of Latin and Greek, but for those in search of general culture. For the benefit of the former, should they see the error of their ways, as they not infrequently do, we should offer courses in elementary Latin and Greek in the college, open of course only to those who have already matriculated in some one of the many forms by which that process may nowadays be accomplished.

I should imagine that this suggestion of mine about special studies in high schools would require no argument, and would generally be approved, if those institutions were merely fitting schools for college. This is, however, not the case. The high school is often called "the people's college", and it is of course true that many of our high school pupils go no farther. Even so, I do not believe that subjects properly belonging to the college can profitably be taught in the high school, any more than I do that because only a small part of our college students take graduate work, it is therefore advisable to teach them subjects which properly belong in the graduate school. The high school gains nothing by trying to give a college education to those who are not willing